

expectation of pleasurable information, he is suddenly blind-folded, and finds himself surrounded and overmatched by hostile persons. Neither, if his story be false, is he likely to have gone to the Mansion House to make an affidavit, nor to have repeated his desire, when told that a deliberately wrong affirmation would involve six months' imprisonment. Lastly, it was inevitable that the Post-office authorities should, however tardily, adopt all necessary precautions; but it was not incumbent on them to treat an undoubtedly valuable witness of intended mischief with contumely and injustice, at any rate until he had been proved a false witness.

I am, Sir, yours obediently,
D. DE BERDT HOVELL.

Clapton, April 23rd, 1883.

DUBLIN HOSPITALS AND THE IRISH PROFESSION.

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR,—We are always saying that there is no profession so defrauded as ours, and yet we every day assist in defrauding one another. What is the use of talk without action? Silence would be more dignified than old womanly grumblings. I have, however, a hope that there is a growing awakening as to the absolute necessity for substituting deeds for mere words, and co-operation and energetic action for isolated and barren protests. Here, now, are two instances where the profession has been wronged. Within the last two weeks two wealthy females, who had arranged to be operated on by me for tumours, were both subsequently induced to go up to the Mater Misericordiæ Hospital, Dublin, in order that they might be operated on for nothing, thus obtaining the services of our profession gratuitously, and at the same time defrauding two poor persons of those beds which were designed exclusively for them. I notified the facts to one of the staff of the Mater, and called on them, in their own interests quite as much as in mine, to insist on the removal of the parties to lodgings, so as to charge them proper fees, or to send them home. That letter led to no action whatever, and I now bring the matter under the cognisance of the Irish profession at large, and I would remind them that it is because these cases are samples, not exceptions, and that these acts of injustice are of long standing, are practised by every hospital in Dublin, and embrace within their sphere every doctor in Ireland, that it is hopeless to attempt to deal with them, and that we provincials must continue to lie under the wrong and the loss. I tell my provincial brethren that if they only but will it they can put down thoroughly, promptly, and decisively this grievous injustice to themselves. I know that many provincial doctors do not care to operate, and that many of these, misled by a short-sighted jealousy, very often prefer to smuggle even wealthy patients into Dublin hospitals. I would meet such local jealousies by having the consultant allow the local man to operate where the latter brings him in, and where he is willing to operate, and when he is not willing I would have his presence invariably sought as a right. I think that such a course as this would go far to get rid of the provincial help at present given to the injurious system complained of. I will undertake to propound a practical scheme, and would invite as many provincial men as possible to form a society for meeting the action of those Dublin physicians and surgeons who would persist in keeping wealthy patients, whether medical or surgical, in hospital after having been informed of the means of the parties. One of us should be charged to report every improper case to the senior surgeon or physician of the hospital, into which such parties might smuggle themselves, and to duly advertise the medical public of the action taken thereon by the different hospital staffs. In this matter medical students could render important service, and looking at the fact that it will be their interests to-morrow, as it is ours to-day, to stamp this practice out, I cannot permit myself to doubt that they will be found so wanting in shrewdness as to hesitate to give every assistance in their power. Let every offending Dublin hospital be convinced that there is at least a large body of provincials who are thoroughly in earnest, and we shall put an end to one of the most grievous systems of injustice that our profession has now to complain of. Once, again, let me appeal to my brethren to wake up to some kind of perception of the pecuniary loss which they sustain, and to the fact that it is in

their power to put an end to such losses. It is not operation cases alone that are smuggled into Dublin hospitals, but wealthy medical cases are daily admitted into them also. There is not the slightest use, I fear, for an individual to appeal to the metropolitan staffs. They were publicly appealed to again and again by me years ago, and in vain.

I am, Sir, yours truly,
Cashed, April 20th, 1883. THOMAS LAFFAN.

CRANIUM HOLDERS.

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR,—If Dr. Ormsby, whose letter on this subject appears in your issue of April 14th, will take the trouble to refer to THE LANCET of 1858, vol. ii., p. 50, he will there find a communication, which you were so good as to publish for me, entitled "A Description of a Form of Craniotome for Post-mortem Examinations," which will, I think, effectually dispose of the claim of priority of invention in such instruments. The cranium holder there depicted is still made by Messrs. Wood and Son, surgical instrument makers of this city, and has this advantage over others recently brought before the profession for a similar purpose, that it can be folded up when not in use so as to occupy very little space in a case of post-mortem instruments of ordinary dimensions.

When I published this description of my invention, I showed at the same time an improved form of saw for dividing the bones of the cranium, so constructed as to prevent, as far as possible, in the hurry of a post-mortem inspection, any injury being done to the surface of the brain by sawing too deeply. In this age of invention it is often very difficult to know what has actually been done by our predecessors, and, I feel confident, Dr. Ormsby was not aware that the principle of his invention had so long since been anticipated by yours, &c.,

EDWARD LUND, F.R.C.S.
Manchester, April 24th, 1883.

THE CONTAGIOUS DISEASES ACTS.

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR,—As I find that my silence during the discussion on Mr. Stansfeld's resolution has not unnaturally been misinterpreted by my professional brethren, who expected me to say something in defence of the committee of which I had been a member, and in favour of Acts which, I believe, to have worked well, will you allow me a few words of explanation? I rose several times in the course of the evening to catch the Speaker's eye, but without success; and when I endeavoured, at the close of the debate, to say a few words, the "evident sense of the House" inflicted the "Clôture" on my intended remarks. At that late hour I only wished to express, in the briefest possible terms, my emphatic dissent from the opinion enunciated by the Chancellor of the Exchequer, to the effect that the Acts could be successfully carried out minus the compulsory examinations.—I am, Sir, your obedient servant,

April 25th, 1883. ROBERT FARQUHARSON.

"FOREIGN DEGREES AND THE MEDICAL BILL."

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR,—I have been in communication with the Lord President of the Council on the above subject, and have this morning received the enclosed letter, which states clearly his Lordship's opinion of the status of foreign graduates as affected by the Bill. I shall therefore be obliged if you will kindly insert it in your next issue.

I am, Sir, your obedient servant,

F. ERNEST POCKOCK, M.D.,
Hon. Sec. Brussels Medical Graduates' Association.
St. Mark's-road, North Kensington, W., April 24th, 1883.

[COPY.]

Council Office, 23rd April, 1883.

SIR,—I am directed by the Lord President of the Council to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of the 21st instant, and to inform you that, in his Lordship's opinion, the Medical Act Amendment Bill now before Parliament enables